

FRANK READE

WEEKLY MAGAZINE,

Containing Stories of Adventures on Land, Sea & in the Air.

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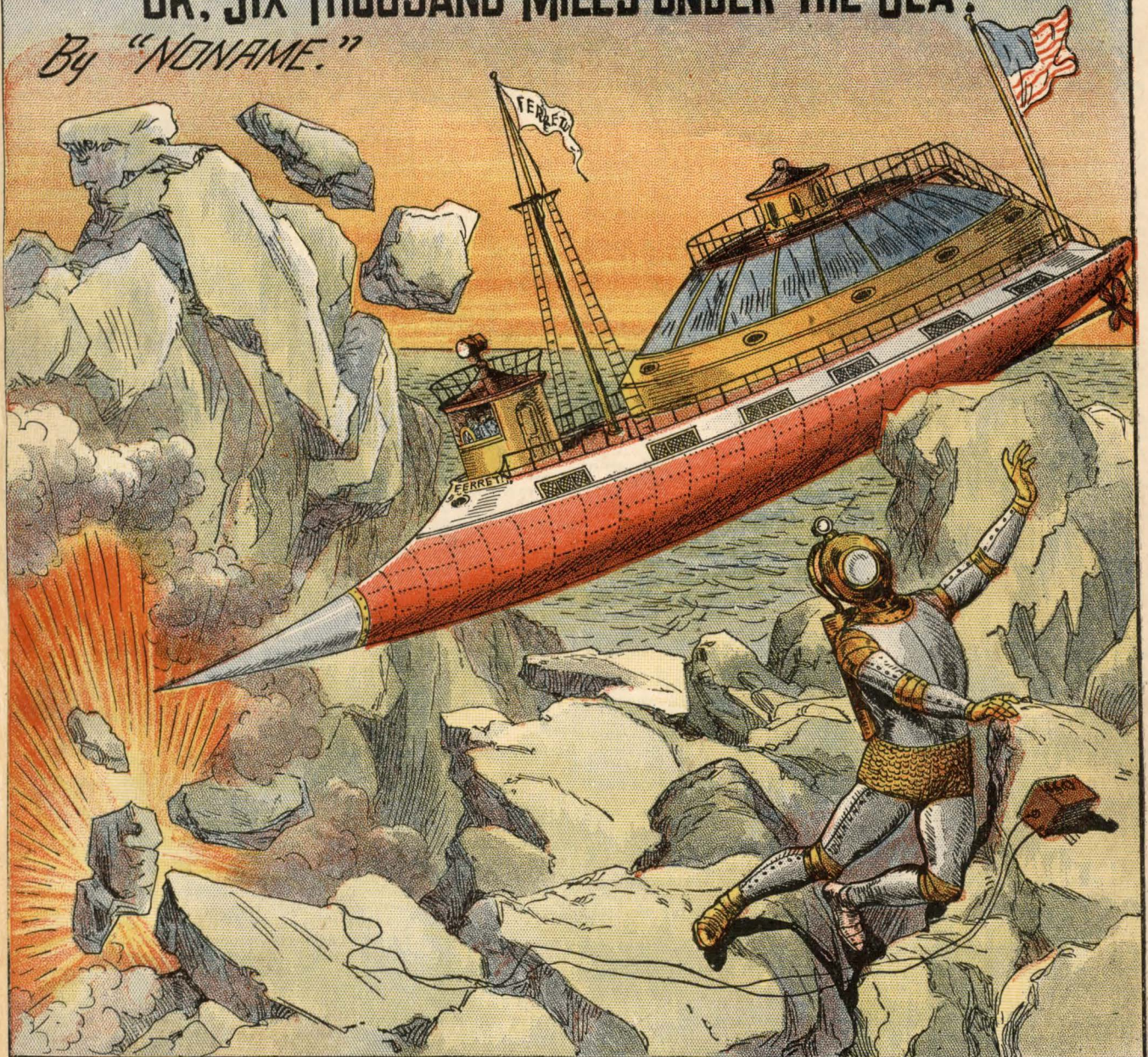
No. 32

NEW YORK, JUNE 5, 1903.

Price 5 Cents.

FRANK READE, JR.'S SEARCH FOR THE SEA SERPENT; OR, SIX THOUSAND MILES UNDER THE SEA.

By "NO NAME."



It was as if a thunderbolt had struck the berg. It reeled and split in twain. The submarine boat shot into the water like a bolt from a catapult. Upon that part of the berg which turned bottom side up was Frank Reade, Jr.

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(Continued on page 3 of cover.)

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Frank Reade, Jr.'s Search for the Sea Serpent;

OR,

SIX THOUSAND MILES UNDER THE SEA.

By "NONAME."

CHAPTER I.

CAPTAIN CROWELL'S STORY.

"Well, how they do cling to that old chestnut. Here is a lengthy article on the sea serpent in the 'News.' Mercy on us! Can't the reporters find material enough without resorting to such stale matter?"

Howard Mayne tossed the paper aside impatiently after making this speech. His friend, Jack Clyde, picked it up.

At the moment they were in the main reading-room of the Bohemian Club. Both were young men, handsome, refined and afflicted with wealth.

"Ah, who has been unwinding an improbable yarn now?" laughed Jack, as he scanned the columns. "Hello, that's queer!"

"What?"

"Why, the old captain who tells this story, Captain Jeremy Crowell, of Hyannis, Massachusetts, is my own uncle."

Howard Mayne gaped at his friend as if he thought him crazy.

"Your uncle?"

"Yes."

"And he swears he has seen the sea serpent? Well, old pal, go to his assistance at once. Fetch him right down to Bloomingdale before he gets violent."

Jack Clyde did not smile. Indeed, he frowned instead, and striking a match, lit a Spanish cheroot.

Then he sank into a chair, and cocking his feet upon the corner of the table, did not speak again until he had read the article through.

Howard Mayne watched him half idly the while. His curiosity was just a bit aroused, and he was anxious to see how his friend would take the news.

In substance the article was worded thus:

"Captain Jeremy Crowell, of Hyannis, tells a wonderful story of the famous sea serpent. The captain is an honest and reliable man, and does not even drink grog."

"He owns the fine schooner, Marguerite, and makes regular trips to the Banks, fishing for cod. When well off the coast of Nova Scotia, the lookout one day called 'Land ho!'

Captain Jeremy went to inspect what looked like a long ridge of black reef rising out of the water.

"To his surprise he discovered that the object was movable, and, in fact, alive, and was amazed to see the leviathan proportions of the sea serpent of fabled fame making off at railroad speed through the water.

"The snake was fully two hundred feet in length, according to Captain Crowell. He soon distanced the schooner, and was out of sight.

"The captain's story is backed by every member of the crew, and is beyond doubt correct. The existence of the wonderful sea serpent is thus proven a fact beyond all manner of doubt."

"Well, that is the truth!"

Howard Mayne looked his amazement.

"What!" he gasped. "You don't mean to say that you believe that cock and bull story?"

"Pardon me," said Jack, with dignity. "My uncle is a thoroughly truthful man. The story is surely true."

Mayne whistled slowly.

"Could not your uncle be mistaken?"

"I hardly think so. I have no doubt he is right. I accept my uncle's word."

"Well," muttered Mayne, as he rose from his seat, "I don't wish to dispute your uncle's word, but the sea serpent is a pretty strong story to swallow, you know. Yet it, of course, is not altogether improbable. I move that we organize a party to hunt down this monster of the briny deep."

Mayne had spoken jestingly.

To his amazement his friend said, coolly:

"All right. I am with you."

Mayne was staggered.

"Did you think I meant it?"

"Why, certainly."

"And you really mean it?"

"I do!"

Mayne drew a deep breath, and sank again into his chair.

"Well, I never!" he exclaimed. "That beats me. Come, now, I'll bluff just as hard as you do. I'll dare you to go with me in quest of the sea serpent!"

Jack Clyde turned and looked his friend squarely in the face.

"That will be diversion for us. I will accept your challenge."

Mayne could hardly believe his senses. Certainly Clyde was in earnest.

"But—how do you propose to do it?" he asked. "Get your uncle's schooner?"

"No; employ a submarine boat."

"A submarine boat?"

"Yes."

"Whew! Who ever heard of such a thing? Who owns so famous a craft?"

"A friend of mine."

"Do you mean it?"

"Yes."

"Who is he?"

"Frank Reade, Jr., the inventor. You have heard of him?"

"Indeed I have," said Mayne, in amazement. "Is it true that he has really invented a submarine boat?"

"Every word of it."

Howard Mayne's whole manner changed. The mention of the name of Frank Reade, Jr., at once put a new face on matters.

"Jack!" he exclaimed, "I am with you. We will do it."

"Then it is settled."

"But——"

"What?"

"Are you sure you can interest Mr. Frank Reade, Jr., in the affair?"

"Sure of it? I know it. He wrote me only the other day about the Ferret, his new invention, and spoke then of taking a submarine voyage as soon as he could gain some object for such."

Howard Mayne became at once excited. He arose and paced the floor vigorously, with his hands in his pockets.

Man of leisure that he was, idleness had palled upon him, and he was afflicted with constant ennui.

This new project aroused his whole being, and he saw before him a certain opportunity for the dispelling of that terrible affliction.

Adventure and excitement were pleasant things for Mayne to contemplate. In this he was like his friend Clyde.

The two chums at once entered into the spirit of the undertaking, with all the zest of youthful minds.

It was decided first to communicate with Frank Reade, Jr. This was done by telegraph. Thus Clyde worded the message:

"FRANK READE, JR., Readestown:

"Will you go in quest of the sea serpent with your submarine boat? I have got on track of it. Answer.

"JACK CLYDE."

"Bohemian Club, New York City."

An answer to this was anxiously awaited. Of course, if Frank Reade, Jr., declined, the affair was ended. It was hoped that he would not.

It was a later hour when the answer came. It found the two young club men engaged in formulating plans.

Jack Clyde hastily broke the seal of the message, and read:

"FRIEND CLYDE—I am ready for anything which will contribute so greatly to the interests of science. Come up to Readestown and see me. We will talk it over.

"Yours ever,

"FRANK READE, JR."

"Hurrah!" cried Jack, flourishing the missive. "I knew that he would accept the terms. Frank Reade, Jr., is wide awake and progressive. Now, Howard, let us go up to Readestown at once."

A night train took them out of the Grand Central Depot. In due time they were in Readestown.

It was in the latter part of the day, and they were met by one of Frank's carriages, and driven at once to the workshops.

Readestown was a smart, driving little city. It had been founded by an ancestor of the young inventor's. Here was established the workshops where Frank turned out his famous inventions.

The carriage halted at the entrance to the machine shop. A comical-looking ducky met the visitors at the gate.

"Yas, sah," he exclaimed, with a grin and a duck of his woolly head, as he read the cards. "Marse Frank done tole me to show yo' in, gemmen. I'se Pomp, sah. Jes' yo' foller me."

"That is the ducky of whom we hear so much in connection with Frank's exploits," whispered Jack to Howard. "Frank has another valuable man—an Irishman named Barney O'Shea. These two chaps have always accompanied him upon all his trips."

"Barney and Pomp!" exclaimed Howard. "I have heard of them."

"Ah, there is Barney."

They were half way across the yard when a sawed-off specimen of the Celtic race met them. He had a mug like a gorilla, and a shock of red hair.

"Shure, an' phwat will yez have here?" he asked, glancing from Pomp to the visitors.

"Jes' cl'ar out de way, chile," said Pomp, authoritatively. "I'se got Marse Frank's ordahs, an' I don' take none ob yo' sass."

"Bejabbers, av ye did it wud be in a way ye deserve," retorted the Celt; "an', shure, that's on yure flat nose!"

"Huh! I see yo' 'bout dat by an' by, honey," said Pomp, threateningly.

"Yez will be shure to."

"Gemmens, don' yo' min' dat sassy I'ish muckah," said Pomp. "He ain' got no manners. Jes' come dis away!"

Both Jack and Howard laughed. They had heard of the characteristics of Barney and Pomp before.

They were really the best of friends, but constantly engaged in friendly squabbles and bickerings.

In these affairs it was hard to say which came out the best. There was really little to choose.

Crossing the yard, with its rows of shops and steel forges upon either hand, the two visitors entered a small building which bore over the door the words:

"MODEL AND DRAUGHTING ROOM."

Pomp opened the door and they walked in. At a desk sat a young man, with frank, handsome features and athletic figure.

A glance at his intelligent cast of features was enough for one to perceive the undeniable stamp of genius. It was Frank Reade, Jr., the world's most famous inventor.

He arose and extended his hand with a pleasant smile, which at once reassured his visitors.

CHAPTER II.

THE FERRET.

"I am glad to see you, gentlemen," said Frank Reade, Jr., pleasantly.

"Then you anticipated our coming?" said Jack.

"I have."

"Good enough."

"Pray have seats."

The two visitors sank into chairs. Then each instinctively looked about.

The draughting-room, as it was called, was fully twenty-five feet square. There were long tables covered with sheets of paper, folios, and the paraphernalia of the draughtsman.

Several clerks were at work at the lower end of the room.

"Well, my friends," said Frank, with a smile, "I suppose you come with your minds full of the sea serpent?"

"We do," replied Jack. "It is needless to say that we are very enthusiastic."

"Well, I believe it a famous project myself."

"I am glad to hear that."

"I wrote you about the Ferret?"

"Yes."

"Well, she is all done, and I must say she is a beauty. I am satisfied with her."

"That is enough," said Jack, heartily; "of course, you are in for our project of chasing the sea serpent."

"Which has hitherto been regarded as a myth," said Frank, with a smile.

"But is, in fact, a reality."

"Of course your uncle is a reliable man?"

"I will swear by him."

"That is quite enough. Then the question is settled. We will go in quest of the sea serpent."

"What a furore the report will create," cried Howard Mayne, eagerly; "the newspaper world will go wild over it."

"Let them!" laughed Frank, "they cannot disturb us. But I have planned the whole affair out since hearing from you."

"Indeed."

"I have put a force of men at work preparing the Ferret for instant service. Stores and equipments are being put aboard."

"Hurrah!" cried Jack; "but a question."

"Well?"

"Of course you will allow us to accompany you?"

"I had decided that way," said Frank, with an inclination of his head. "There are just five of us. Barney and Pomp, you two gentlemen and myself. That should be a sufficient crew to operate the submarine boat."

"Give us our duties and we will attend to them faithfully!" cried Jack.

"Your duties will be slight," replied Frank; "the boat can be easily operated by one man. The motive power is electricity, and every part of the machinery is controlled from the pilot-house by means of an electric key-board."

"Wonderful! How I would like to be on board at this moment."

"Perhaps you would like to take a look at her?" said Frank.

"I assure you I would be delighted."

"Come this way."

Frank arose and led the way through the draughting-room. The two club men followed him.

They passed out again into the yard. This time it was another part of the yard, however, and they saw in its center a huge tank or basin of water.

It was connected with the waters of a canal, just beyond, by a lock.

In the center of this basin was the object which at once claimed their attention. This was the Ferret.

The submarine boat was certainly a remarkable craft.

Its lines were most peculiar, being long, tapering and slender. The bow was ornamented with a sharp and powerful ram.

Two masts, fore and aft, arose from its deck. The deck itself was guarded by hand-rails.

The main part of the deck was occupied by a huge dome-like cabin, with a conical-shaped cupola.

There were heavy windows of plate-glass in the dome and a balcony with a platform and guard-rails. Circular dead-eye windows extended around the middle of the dome while just below were square windows.

Forward was a pilot-house, with plate-glass windows of enormous thickness. Over it was a searchlight.

The whole structure was of thinly rolled, but durable and strong steel. Through the dome extended the air-chambers, by which the vessel was enabled to elevate and sink in the water.

This was done by taking in a huge volume of water into the tank to sink her, and expelling it by pneumatic pressure to raise her to the surface.

Of course the system of air supply aboard the vessel was similar to that of all submarine vessels, and depended wholly upon the working of a chemical apparatus in the cabin, which renewed the vitiated air by replacing it with pure oxygen.

As long as this could continue the vessel could remain under water and the crew could survive.

This is a meager description of the outward appearance of the Ferret.

Crossing a plank, they now entered the cabin of the vessel.

Here a wonderful sight met their gaze. It was like entering a miniature palace.

The interior of the cabin was furnished in the most luxurious manner.

There were all manner of expensive adornments, rich drapery, curios, cabinets of rare books, and many other things. It was a place of delight.

The visitors expressed their pleasure in terms of rapture. Then they passed on into the dining-saloon, and then to the staterooms.

Beyond these they came to the most interesting sight of all—the engine-room.

Here were the electric engines which operated the boat. They were a wonderful sight.

Passing among the dynamos Frank explained each de-

tail in a comprehensive manner. Many were the curious and unheard of devices employed aboard the Ferret.

Then the huge elevating tank was visited; next the chemical-room, where were the huge cylinders which manufactured air and sent it coursing by means of valves all through the boat when it was under water.

It would require a volume to detail all the wonders of the submarine boat, so we will ask the reader's indulgence and pass on to incidents of the story.

After the inspection of the Ferret the party returned to the draughting-room.

Clyde and Mayne expressed their admiration of the boat in glowing terms. Then Frank said:

"Well, now, the question is, when shall we start on this famous voyage?"

"We are ready whenever you are, Mr. Reade," said Mayne.

"I have been ready for a good while," said Frank. "Suppose we put it three days from now?"

"That is agreeable."

"Then it is settled."

"We will be here ready for the start in three days. I suppose we shall start from here?"

"Oh, yes. You see this basin is connected by a canal with the river. We can easily float down to the sea."

"And then——"

"We will steer straight for the locality where the sea serpent was last seen."

This closed the interview. Clyde and Mayne took the next train back to New York.

It was too good a thing to keep. They were at once attacked by newspaper sharps, and fell easy victims.

The result was that the press of the country was soon teeming with the project. Everybody was interested.

"It will be a famous thing if they actually capture the sea serpent," cried one man; "but I doubt its existence."

This was where the rub came.

There were few people who believed in the existence of the serpent. Many considered it a fool's errand.

But the name of Frank Reade, Jr., was a strong endorsement for the enterprise. A large number believed in it.

And now Frank was flooded with letters from cranks.

An owner of a dime museum wrote him offering a mighty sum for the skin of the sea serpent, or failing in this, for the exhibition of his submarine boat.

Of course Frank heeded none of these. He hurriedly prepared for the departure.

Of course the news got down to Hyannis to the ears of

old Captain Crowell. At once the captain wrote to his nephew.

Jack was glad to get the letter, for it gave a detailed description of the serpent, and the exact latitude and longitude where it was seen.

"I hope ye'll have success, lad," wrote the old captain. "An' I believe ye will, for ye was allus a smart lad."

"Very kind of uncle, I'm sure," laughed Jack. "I'll do my best."

But the next morning Howard Mayne came across a peculiar paragraph in the paper. Thus it read:

"Another sea captain sees the famous sea serpent. This time it is off Bar Harbor, Maine.

"Captain Dennis Haynes, of the brig America, reports sighting the sea serpent in the vicinity of Bar Harbor, yesterday. His description of it tallies with that of Captain Crowell."

"Well," cried Jack, laughing, "if we only hurry up there's no doubt but that we shall find his snakeship. He certainly appears to be in those waters."

"Right!" cried Howard. "I feel sure that we'll succeed."

"So do I."

The two clubmen were dined that night by their brother members of the Bohemian Club. They were the heroes of the hour.

The sang froid and pluck with which they undertook the enterprise charmed their fellow club members, and the best of wishes went with them.

The next morning they were en route for Readestown.

The Ferret lay in the waters of the canal, all ready for them, when they arrived there.

A mighty crowd, composed of all classes, had gathered to see the start. At the appointed hour the voyagers went on board.

They were cheered by the crowd as they did so.

Then Frank Reade, Jr., gave orders to Barney, who was in the pilot-house:

"Start the capstan engine; up with the anchor, Barney."

The automatic and electric capstan drew the anchor from its muddy depths. The Ferret's engines began to work.

The passengers stood on deck waving a farewell.

Barney held the wheel, and the submarine vessel went gliding on its way down the stream.

Down the canal it quickly went, and from thence into the river. The view of Readestown from here was complete.

The river banks and the house tops were crowded with excited people.

This showed plainly how mighty was the public interest in the undertaking.

"All these people will scan the daily papers for news of us," said Frank; "their interest is great, is it not?"

"Indeed, you are right," replied Jack. "I hope we will succeed."

"If we bag the sea serpent," said Howard Mayne, "our fame is made."

The Ferret glided on down the river, leaving Readestown far behind. In due course the sea was reached.

The mighty enterprise was well begun, and thrilling incidents were in store for them.

CHAPTER III.

THE SINKING SHIP.

Out into the open sea the Ferret glided. When well out to sea Frank said:

"Now we will take a farewell of the surface."

"Are we going down?" asked Jack.

"Yes."

Quick orders were given Pomp to clear the deck of all portable articles. Then all went into the dome.

The doors, when closed, were hermetically sealed. Indeed, each had a vestibule, occupied by pneumatic pressure, which would of itself be sufficient to keep the water out.

Barney pressed the pneumatic lever.

Instantly the valves opened and the tank began to fill. Down settled the submarine boat, gracefully.

Down to the bottom of the sea it went. The depth was fifty fathoms, and the pressure was therefore slight.

The bed of the ocean here presented the usual appearance peculiar to the North American coast.

There were tangled forests of seaweed, huge ledges of rock, plains of sand, and many forms of fish life.

The boat was allowed to rest on the bottom but a moment, however; then Frank went to the pilot-house.

He took charge of the key-board, and turning on the searchlight, sent its rays far ahead.

This made the course clear, and the submarine boat was able to glide swiftly and safely through the water at but a few feet from the bottom.

The electric lights of the boat made the bed of the ocean visible in every direction for a great distance.

In this manner the Ferret continued on her submarine voyage.

Many and strange were the sights beheld by the voyagers.

Huge sea monsters fled into deep and dark caverns, or vanished into the gloom beyond.

Wrecks of sunken ships and reefs of coral, submarine hills and valleys, and many other features were passed by.

Frank had laid his course straight for Mount Descent which is off the coast of Maine.

This was where the sea serpent had been last seen. He yet lingered in that vicinity the chances were good that the Ferret would find him.

It was a novel sensation to Jack and Howard to travel under water in such a fashion.

Life on board the Ferret was peculiarly fascinating. It was a treat to sit by the plate-glass windows and view the wonders of the sea.

And one day a strange and thrilling scene was encountered.

The boat came to a mighty plain of pearly white sand. There was no kelp or weed of any kind to obstruct its smoothness.

And here, in a small area, there lay the white bones of a score of human beings.

In various attitudes they lay. The rotting keel of a rowboat told the story.

"Foundered at sea!" was Frank's verdict. "Probably they attempted to leave the ship in a lifeboat and were swamped."

"And all lie here in a common grave!" cried Jack; "how dreadful it is to think of."

"Who do you suppose they were in life?" asked Mayne abstractedly.

"That will never be known," replied Frank Reade, Jr. "There is not enough of their effects left to decide that."

"That is so."

"Beggorra, it lukes to me as if there was a name on the stern of the boat," cried Barney.

"And it does to me," agreed Frank.

The submarine boat had been brought to a stop, and was drifting over the spot. Pomp rushed to a side window and threw the glare of an electric lamp full upon the rotting boat's stern.

This enabled all to read plainly the name:

"Esther, Liverpool."

"Englishmen!" cried Jack. "Probably an English vessel."

"No doubt," agreed Frank; "but they are all beyond our aid."

"Buried in one hundred fathoms of water."

Frank sent the boat away from the spot, and no one was sorry. For some while the Ferret kept on evenly.

Then the first of a series of incidents occurred. Suddenly the boat began to pitch violently.

There seemed a fearful commotion in the water. Everybody rushed to the windows.

And there, in the glare of the electric lights, an awful sight was seen. A tremendous, dark body was coming swiftly down through the water.

It looked like a mountain, but Frank saw the outlines of a ship's hull. At once he threw back the electric switch and stopped the Ferret.

"A sinking ship!" he cried. "My God! how horrible." Excited cries broke from the others.

The ship might have crushed the Ferret had it gone much further. Down it settled, creating fearful commotion.

The voyagers watched the scene horror-struck.

"A sinking ship!"

"Her crew must be drowning!"

"My God! can we not help them?"

"Too late!" cried Frank. "We could never reach them in time. But—bring up the diving suits, Barney!"

The Celt flew to obey.

Yet all could not help but see that it was too late. Already those on board were dead.

"There must be an awful storm overhead," said Frank; "this vessel has foundered."

"She is an American vessel," cried Frank. "See her flag."

The doomed ship's flag yet hung at her yard. It was easy to recognize the stars and stripes.

And now numbers of her crew could be seen lashed in the rigging. Some of them were even yet gasping.

But they could not be saved. There was not sufficient time to do this.

However, Frank donned the diving-suit brought him by Barney. The Celt got into the other one.

These were his own invention, and portable, requiring no life-line or air-pump.

Upon the back of the diver was a chemical air reservoir, where the oxygen was manufactured and sent into the helmet by an automatic valve.

This enabled the diver to travel about anywhere for hours as freely as if upon dry land.

When they had got into their diving-suits, Frank and Barney entered the vestibule by which they were to leave the submarine boat.

This had a door opening out upon the deck. By closing the door leading into the cabin, the vestibule could be filled with water, and the diver could walk out.

Upon returning all that was necessary was to close the outer door, and turn a valve which forced the water out by

pneumatic pressure. Then the diver could remove his helmet and safely enter the cabin.

Frank and Barney passed out upon the deck.

Those in the cabin watched them through the plate-glass windows.

Climbing down from the Ferret's deck the two divers started for the wreck. It was but a short distance to cover. Frank led the way. Reaching the hull he caught a swinging rope and went up to the rail with ease.

Barney followed him.

Both stood on deck. The scene before them was a ghastly one.

It was rendered very plain in the glare of the electric light.

The deck was strewn with wreckage, and the bulwarks of the vessel were smashed, probably by the weight of the sea.

But the horrible sight of all was that of the dead bodies everywhere, lashed to the rail, and masts, and rigging.

But all these were in view and were easily recognizable as seamen. Frank approached the cabin door.

As he did so he saw, against the mainmast, the name of the ship:

"VIRGIL, Charleston, S. C."

Frank saw that the cabin hatch was battened down. A sickening thought came to him.

In that cabin were the ship's passengers. How many there were it was not easy to say. Certainly all were dead.

Drowned like rats in a trap. How horrible a fate!

Frank half hesitated in raising the hatch. He half feared the sight which might meet his gaze.

But he summoned his self-control and struck heavily at the hatch with his ax. It yielded, and presently he raised it.

There were the cabin stairs. The light from the top of Frank's helmet, a small electric globe, fed by a storage battery connected with his diving suit, illuminated the stairway.

Frank advanced downward slowly. Barney followed.

Their helmet lights illuminated the cabin. The sight was horrible.

There were fully a score of corpses, men, women and children, in that cabin. As yet they had not been drowned long enough for the gases to work, so that the specific gravity of their bodies kept them in the places where they had fallen.

Frank advanced into the cabin, as did Barney.

They passed from one to another of the victims, scanning their faces for some familiar look.

But all were strangers to them. The passenger list of the *Virgil* had been heavy. Corpses were everywhere, in the cabin saloon, the staterooms, and the captain's cabin.

Here Frank secured the log of the ship, and a chest containing the passenger list and moneys of the ship.

A few other valuables were taken; then Frank placed his helmet close to Barney's, and shouted:

"I think we had better return now."

"All roight, sor," replied Barney. "Jist as ye say."

"I have here all the positively valuable matter which we would be able to remove."

"Shure, sor, phwat will yez do with it, anyway?"

"Oh, I will see that it is returned safely to its proper owner. The fate of the ship will probably remain a mystery until I do."

"Phwat, sor? Do yez belave that she wint down wid all on board?"

"Yes."

"Shure, that's a pity."

"So it is. But come; we can do no good here."

Barney made no demur, but followed Frank up the cabin stairs to the deck. A few moments more and they were at the rail.

The outlines of the *Ferret* could be plainly seen.

The glare of her electric lights made all as plain as day about. It was easy enough to find their way back.

But at that moment Frank felt a curious commotion in the water.

Then, before he could act to preserve himself, he was seized, as if in a vise, and whisked away through the water.

Horror most awful shut down over his soul as he realized his awful position.

He was in the cruel jaws of a monster man-eating shark, and being carried away further every moment from the submarine boat.

CHAPTER IV.

OFF THE COAST OF MAINE.

The shark had caught Frank just above the knees. Fortunately its teeth did not reach the diving-suit, which was mostly about the shoulders.

Neither had the jaws closed so tightly that he was badly wounded. Indeed, the shark's hold was mostly upon his clothing.

Then Frank realized that the monster was carrying him away to a safer spot to make a meal upon him.

It would be an easy matter for the shark to bite him in two and swallow at least half of him.

But the young inventor was a cool and plucky fellow. He did not intend to yield to this contingency if he could help it.

As he hung from the shark's jaws he was conscious of being whisked through the water at terrific speed.

Without a moment's hesitation Frank drew his knife from his belt, for he had the use of his arms.

The monster's eye was just within his reach. Frank drove the knife to the hilt into that member.

There was a convulsive movement upon the shark's part, a fearful commotion in the water, and Frank felt himself falling.

Falling through the water, however, is not like falling through the air. It was a gentle sail to the bottom of the sea.

But he was out of the shark's jaws. That was one source of congratulation. His life was saved.

A moment later Frank struck the bottom. He was practically uninjured, save for a few flesh wounds.

The shark had disappeared, leaving a bloody wake. It was not likely that he would return.

As soon as Frank could collect his scattered senses he had once set out for the *Ferret*.

He was guided by a distant glare of light. He reckoned that the shark had carried him fully a mile.

It had been a very narrow escape for him. Barney had believed his master lost.

The Celt was wild with horror and hopelessness. He was powerless to act.

"Och, murther, murther!" he wailed. "Shure the master's gone! Phwat shall I do! Phwativer shall I do!"

He would have gone in pursuit, but the shark had left no trail behind him; he was out of sight with his prey.

Words cannot describe Barney's dismay.

He sank down upon the deck utterly overcome. It was a long time before he recovered sufficiently to return to the *Ferret*.

As he burst into the vestibule, and a moment later into the cabin, he could hardly wait for his helmet to be removed.

"Och, fer the love of God, go afther him!" he screamed. "Shure, the master's lost!"

The others were horrified.

"Wha' am dat yo' say, yo' good fo' nuffin' I'sh?" cried Pomp, furiously. "Yo' let Marse Frank be done killed?"

"Och, wurra, wurra, an' how cud I help it? Shure, I niver seen him till he was gone like a flash!"

"What took him?" asked Jack Clyde, excitedly.

"Shure, it was a shark, an' a divil av a big wan. Ah, 's eaten Misther Frank up afore this."

"My God! that is awful," cried Howard Mayne. "Shall I not go in pursuit?"

"Shure, that's jist phwat yez want ter do!" cried Barney. "Let the Ferret go ahead, I say, an' bad cess to the shark."

"Dat am jes' wha' I'm gwine fo' to do," cried Pomp, rushing into the pilot-house. "Yo' jes' don' want ter tell us chile dat Marse Frank amn't alibe!"

Pomp changed the lever, and the submarine boat shot forward; past the wreck it went quickly.

Then Pomp elevated the boat until fifty feet or more from the bottom of the sea.

Barney sprang to the searchlight and sent its rays everywhere through the water.

The result was most gratifying.

Far in the distance Pomp chanced to see the form of a man just climbing over a heap of tangled weeds.

It was Frank Reade, Jr.

He had sighted the boat and was rapidly making for it. Pomp gave a yell of delight.

"Marse Frank am alibe!" he cried. "I jes' see him, 'tho' as yo' am alibe, dis minnit. Whoop-la!"

The Ferret bore down rapidly upon the spot where Frank was.

The young inventor experienced a thrill of joy as he saw that he was rescued. A few moments later the boat settled down near him.

He clambered quickly aboard. A few moments later he was in the cabin.

The happy outcome of what had bid fair to be a serious matter was a joyful thing to all.

Mutual congratulations were exchanged. Frank's wounds happily did not prove serious.

A matter to be regretted was that the log of the Virgil had been lost.

This would, no doubt, have thrown much light upon the fate of the ship. But it was decided not to return.

So the Ferret went on her way.

She was now well off the Maine coast. If the sea serpent was in the vicinity they should, before long, come across him.

But though the Ferret cruised about for a week under the sea not a sign of the monster was found.

It was then decided to proceed directly to the Grand Banks, off the coast of Newfoundland.

Accordingly, the course was set in that direction at once.

For a long time the Ferret sailed on through the dark waters of the North Atlantic.

The bed of the ocean here did not present those interesting features found in tropical seas.

There were no coral reefs, sponge beds and beautiful aquatic plants, as in those seas.

Instead, all was gloomy and dark and uninviting. There were uncanny depths, valleys as black as midnight, black ooze and mud, and giant boulders.

Whales and seals took the place of sharks and cuttlefish. The water was icy cold.

One day Frank announced that they were upon the fishing banks. They were made aware of this fact by several times encountering the deep sea lines and nets of the fishermen.

What a surprise it would have been for the fishermen if the Ferret had suddenly popped up out of the sea before them.

But more serious matters were in hand, and Frank had no thought of taking all this trouble for so slight recompense; so the Ferret went on its way, and the fishermen were none the wiser.

Still to the northward the Ferret kept. Diligently the sea was searched.

"Really, it is about like looking for a needle in a haystack," finally concluded Howard Mayne. "I daresay we are very foolish."

"Don't say that," said Frank. "You are getting a deep sea cruise, with the chance of at any moment running upon the serpent. We may cruise here for a lifetime without finding him, but on the other hand we may find him before an hour."

"Let us hope for the latter chance," cried Jack Clyde. "We are having some fun, anyway."

"Oh, I'm not finding any fault," put in Howard, quickly. Barney and Pomp were in the happiest of moods.

Barney, especially, was chuckling in his sleeve at a good joke he had put up on Pomp.

The darcy was supreme ruler in his kitchen, or galley, and woe betide the invader or the meddler.

Barney was fond of abstracting choice doughnuts from Pomp's larder, on the sly. It was a long time before the darcy could account for their mysterious disappearance.

When he did discover the cause he set about curing the thief in a most original manner.

This consisted of infusing in several decoy cakes a mixture of tincture of jalap. This terrible, sickish dose made Barney deadily sick, and he experienced great difficulty in overcoming a disposition to constantly retch.

It cured his appetite for stolen doughnuts completely.

But he swore an inner and fearful oath of vengeance.

He was determined to get square with Pomp in some way. It was not long before his lively inventive genius hit upon a plan.

Over the door of the galley, while on watch one night, he managed to suspend a bag of flour, and arranged it so cleverly that any one opening the door from the outside would receive the full benefit of it over his person.

When Barney called Pomp for the morning watch, he turned in and slept for a few hours, as though his conscience was not heavily burdened with guilt.

But he took care to be awake early and ready for the fun.

Promptly, at the hour of five, Pomp began his duties in the galley.

This morning was no exception.

But when he passed through the cabin Barney was skulking behind him, with a grin upon his broad mug as bright as an Italian sunset.

Pomp reached the door of the galley.

He was great for talking to himself, and now, as he saw the door closed, he began to jaw.

"Howebber did dat do' git close?" he muttered. "Dat am berry queer. I jes' spec' dat no 'count I'ishman hab jes' been foolin' roun' here ag'in. I reckon I bettah gib him anodder dose—he, he, he!"

Barney held onto his sides to suppress his laughter. It was altogether too funny.

The darky's hand was now upon the door-knob.

He opened the door, and—

Whew—whish—whang—bang!

"Ugh—ouch—huh—murder!"

Out into the cabin reeled the astounded Ethiopian. Words can hardly describe his appearance.

His complexion naturally was black as ebony. It was now as white as driven snow.

If Pomp had ever experienced a desire for change of color, it was now gratified most literally.

The flour covered him from head to foot, and hung in a choking cloud about him.

He puffed and wheezed and sneezed furiously before he was able to speak a word. Then he began to see the point of the joke.

Digging the flour out of his nose, ears and mouth, he made a dive for Barney, whom he chanced to see at that moment.

"Fo' de Lawd, I done kill yo' fo' dis, I'ish!" he yelled. "Yo' nebber fool dis chile dat a way, ag'in!"

Barney was so convulsed with laughter that he could hardly control himself. But he managed to get out of Pomp's way.

Rushing into the pilot-house he banged the door and locked it.

The darky tried to force it, but could not. The rump brought the sleepers from their staterooms, and they came rushing out in amazement at the sight Pomp presented.

"For mercy's sake, Pomp, what ails you?" cried Frank Reade, Jr., half in anger.

CHAPTER V.

A FIGHT WITH A WHALE.

"It am dat no 'count I'ishman," cried Pomp, wildly. "He jes' play one ob his sassy tricks on me! Lor' sakes, dis chile cud jes' lay his han's on him now——"

"Well, well, enough of this sort of joking," cried Frank angrily. "I don't like it."

Pomp at once subsided.

Barney unlocked the pilot-house door.

"Begorra, Misther Frank," he said, meekly, "I cudn help but git square wid the omadhoun'."

"What did you have to get square with him for?"

"Shure, he nigh poisoned me a time back by puttin' somethin' in his doughnuts."

"Well, you must quit this sort of fooling," cried Frank. "It cannot end in any good results."

The two jokers were about to slink away much abashed when a startling thing happened.

Suddenly, and without warning, there was a terrific shock, and every man was thrown from his feet.

It was for a moment as if the vessel was going to piece. "Heavens!" cried Howard Mayne, the first to scramble to his feet, "what on earth was that?"

"We've struck a rock!" cried Jack.

But this was disproved, for the ship was humming along on an even keel.

"An earthquake!"

But it remained for Frank Reade, Jr., to discover the real meaning of the shock.

He rushed into the pilot-house, and a startling sight met his gaze.

There, not fifty yards distant, was a leviathan body moving toward the Ferret at lightning speed.

It was a monster whale of the sperm species. Its jaws were wide open, and it seemed certain to crush the boat to fragments.

Straight for the Ferret it came.

Quick as a flash Frank pressed the rising lever.

The whale struck the boat amidships. Had it been full and fair it must have been smashed.

But as Frank pressed the lever the boat leaped upward. As a result the whale dove under it, the keel scraping its long back.

Up shot the Ferret, and to the surface in a calm sea. Up came the whale a hundred yards distant, and spouted. The monster swam around the boat, apparently inclined to make another attack.

"Look out for him!" cried Mayne. "He will sink us." "Begorra, it's a bad-lukin' crather he is," cried Barney. "In here, every one of you," cried Frank. "I'll fix him." Into the pilot-house all sprang.

In one corner was a platform, with glass under it. This was designed for such emergencies as the present.

Upon this platform all stood. Then Frank quickly connected a couple of wires with the key-board.

Pressing a key the circuit was made, and the full force of the current went through the steel hull of the boat.

Should the whale come in contact with it now it was likely that it would not venture to do so again.

But the monster could see in the submarine boat only a rival occupant of the deep sea.

Suddenly, head on, it made a rush for the boat. "Look out!" cried Frank. "Prepare for the shock." All clung to the glass platform. To fall from this meant death. It was a most critical moment.

On came the whale like an engine of destruction. The next moment the collision came. The whale struck the boat. It was half lifted out of the water, but the steel sides resisted.

And the current passed through the whale instantly, killing it in the quickest possible manner.

It floated on the top of the water. Frank instantly shut off the current.

"Victory!" he cried. All cheered, and then rushed out on deck to take a look at the monster, which floated alongside.

It was a relief to all to, for the first time in many weeks, breathe the outer air.

"Is he not a monster?" cried Howard Mayne. "He is," agreed Jack.

"Begorra, it's nigh as big as the Ferret, he is!" averred Barney.

"There is some oil in his carcass, I'll warrant," said Frank. "It's a pity we have not room aboard for it."

"And must it go to waste?" "It looks like it."

"Oh, if we could only sight some whaling vessel now."

Instinctively all looked around. A great cry broke from their lips.

"A ship!"

"Hurrah!"

Certainly, out on the horizon there was plainly visible a ship. It was bearing down toward them.

Frank went into the cabin for his glass. When he came out he studied the distant vessel.

Then he said:

"On my word, it is a whaling vessel."

"How do you know that?" asked Howard Mayne.

"Don't you see the black smoke from her funnels?"

"Like any steamer."

"She is not a steamer. That smoke is not coal or wood smoke. You cannot mistake its volume and color. It is oil."

"Then the smoke comes from her trying furnaces?" asked Howard.

"Exactly."

The whaler had evidently sighted them, for as she drew nearer a signal flag was sent up.

Frank answered it, and then the whaler fired a small cannon. Nearer she drew every moment.

It could be seen that she was an American vessel.

As all on board the Ferret were anxious to accost the whalers, the submarine boat was allowed to lay alongside the dead whale.

Soon the ship tacked, and showed her broadside, lying to, not more than a hundred yards distant.

Then came the hail:

"Ahoy!"

"Ahoy the ship!" cried Frank.

"What craft is that?"

"The Ferret, submarine boat, from Readestown, U.S.A."

There was a pause; then Frank shouted:

"What ship is that?"

"The Priscilla, from New Bedford, out for whales."

"Well, lower a boat and come over. We've a prize here for you."

"Ay, ay!"

The next moment a boat put out from the Priscilla's side. She carried four seamen, and the captain and mate.

As the boat drew nearer, the captain was seen to be a tall, bearded man.

He saluted as he sprang onto the Ferret's deck, and gripped hands with Frank.

"I am Captain Benson!"

"I am Frank Reade, Jr."

"When we sighted you we fancied we had struck an

enormous whale. The shape of your craft gave us the idea."

"Exactly; but I can assure you we are not in that class."

"Yet you seem to be having good success. That is a beauty lying alongside."

"Ah, but you mistake," said Frank. "We are not whalers."

"Not whalers?"

"No."

The captain looked amazed.

"May I be permitted to ask what you are, then?"

"We are simply navigators of the submarine sea, and in quest of the sea serpent."

Captain Benson looked at Frank as if he fancied him gone crazy. He did not speak for a moment.

"Thunder and guns!" he finally gasped. "I hope I'm not dreaming!"

"It is a reality."

"In quest of the sea serpent?"

"Yes."

"Do you mean it?"

"Of course I do."

"Well," laughed Benson, good-naturedly, "that's a kind of a fool's errand, is it not?"

"I think not. We are going to make a good search."

"I certainly hope you'll have luck."

"We hope to."

"Yes; but you spoke of this being a submarine boat!"

"Certainly."

"You don't mean it!"

"Yes, I do."

The captain whistled softly, and then turned toward the rail.

"Well, good luck to ye," he said. "I'm going back and think this over. I'm not sure whether I'm drunk or dreaming."

"Wait," said Frank. "I'll prove to you all I say."

"You will?"

"Yes."

"All right!"

"Come into the cabin."

Captain Benson followed Frank into the Ferret's cabin. He gazed about him in amazement.

"Well, I vum!" he exclaimed. "You've got things pretty nice, here!"

"We intend to be comfortable!" said Frank; "but come into the engine-room."

"The engine-room!" exclaimed the whaler's captain. "Does this craft go by steam?"

"No," replied Frank. "It goes by electricity."

"You don't mean it?"

"I'll show you."

The whaler's captain followed Frank about the vessel completely dumbfounded at what he saw.

"Well, this beats me!" he said; "but, hi—hi! we're going down!"

There was a rush of waters—a lunge, and the craft disappeared down. Frank had beckoned to those on deck, and they had sprang into the cabin.

Barney had sprung the lever at a signal from Frank.

Down went the submarine boat to the bottom of the sea.

"Don't have any fear, Captain," said Frank, with a laugh; "you won't be harmed."

"Thunder and guns!" ejaculated Benson, in consternation; "do you mean to say that we can rise again?"

"Certainly!"

"And this boat can travel under or above the water?"

"Just so."

"But how in the name of Neptune do you get air to breathe?"

Frank explained this at length.

"Great Moses!" gasped the whaler's captain, "I never heard the likes of this before. Why, my crew, up above, will reckon we're in Davy Jones' locker."

"And so you are," laughed Frank; "but not for keeps."

"Wall, I own up to being beat; but I'm glad to know you're an American, for you're the smartest young man I ever met!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE SEA SERPENT.

This overwhelming compliment somewhat confused Frank, but he took it gracefully, and replied:

"I simply let my works speak for themselves."

"Well, by Jupiter, they speak well."

The old captain went to the glass windows and looked out.

He had sailed the sea's surface for forty years, but this was the first time that he had ever seen its hidden depths.

Frank explained many curious things to him.

Then he made a signal to Barney.

The Ferret began to rise.

Up it went quickly and steadily. A moment later and it was above the surface.

There, not fifty feet distant, was the body of the whale. Just beyond was the rowboat, making for the ship.

As the Ferret rose from the depths the astonished sailors lit rowing and gave a yell.

Pomp opened the cabin door, and Captain Benson rushed out on deck.

"Heigho, you blockheads!" he roared. "Come back! I've been down to see old Davy and back again."

This command was not to be disobeyed, and, of course, the boat's crew returned.

"Well, Skipper, I wish ye luck," said Benson, shaking Frank's hand; "but I wouldn't change crafts with ye, though yours may be the best. I'd rather sail above the sea than under."

"The same to you," replied Frank; "and I hope you may get some good oil out of that whale."

The captain looked amazed.

"It's yours," he said.

"To the contrary; it is yours," said Frank. "Accept it with our compliments."

Benson was so astonished that for a moment he could not speak. Finally, he blurted out:

"I'll pay ye well fer it."

"No, you won't," said Frank, decidedly.

"Why not?"

"I don't want your money. You are entirely welcome."

But before the captain could again utter his thanks, a loud cry came from the ship:

"Whale ho! There she spouts!"

For the moment Captain Benson forgot that he was not on the deck of his own ship, and shouted:

"Where away?"

"Dead to windward," came the reply.

All eyes were turned in that direction.

Upon the surface of the sea, not a mile distant, was seen a moving black body.

Indeed, there seemed to be several of them, appearing and reappearing.

"A school of whales!" cried one of the men in the boat; "and they are swimming in single file."

"No, they ain't," roared the captain. "It is no such thing. I know a whale when I see it."

Every eye was upon the distant monster of the deep.

"What is it, then?"

"It ain't a whale, and I'll take my oath."

The excitement was intense. Then, suddenly, up from the water was reared a great head.

An enormous pair of jaws, with glistening teeth, was seen. Frank Reade, Jr., sprang to the pilot-house, crying:

"The sea serpent! At last!"

The most fearful of excitement ensued. Captain Ben-

son leaped into his own boat. The Ferret was sent full speed toward the great monster.

Like a dart the submarine boat raced through the water.

But the sea serpent seemed to move faster. It receded away from her with ease.

Frank crowded on full speed.

Suddenly the monster seemed to slacken its speed, and come almost to a stop.

Its huge proportions lay upon the surface, extending for a fabulous length. It seemed certainly three hundred feet in its entirety.

"Merciful powers!" gasped Howard Mayne. "What a monster!"

"Shall we dare tackle it?" asked Jack Clyde.

"One blow of the electric ram should stupefy it," replied Frank. "If I can only get near enough to strike it."

This was the provision Frank had made for the annihilation of the serpent.

He had connected the steel ram of the boat with the dynamos in such a way that a blow from it would give an all-powerful shock.

In this way he hoped to conquer the sea serpent.

With ordinary weapons it would have been folly to tackle such a monster in the open sea.

The weight of its folds, a blow of its enormous head or tail would have crushed the submarine boat like an egg-shell.

Frank knew this full well.

The whale ship and Captain Benson's boat were mere specks on the horizon. They were not seen again.

The sea serpent lay quite inactive upon the surface.

Its head was beneath the water.

When a hundred yards distant Frank changed the course of the Ferret.

He charged the steel ram, and held the boat straight for the immense body. Then he threw the electric switch wide open.

The Ferret shot forward like a bolt out of a gun.

Full tilt it raced down for the serpent. It was calculated to strike the great body full and fair.

But the best laid plans often fail. The purpose of the young inventor was foiled in a very peculiar manner.

Suddenly, and without any warning, the huge monster reared itself partly out of the water in sinuous lines.

That part which the ram should have struck was raised fully twenty feet above the surface. The Ferret shot under it like an arrow.

Whether the act of the monster was intentional or not it was not easy to say.

It had, however, succeeded in thwarting Frank's purpose. The Ferret raced a hundred yards away upon the other side.

While the sea serpent was making a sinuous course away to the northward.

In that direction lay a huge fog bank, which had suddenly risen.

Into this the serpent vanished. Before the Ferret had been brought about, it had vanished from sight.

The disappointment of Frank Reade, Jr., knew no bounds.

"What awful luck," he exclaimed. "I was sure we had the monster. How did it happen?"

"We went under him," said Howard.

"Then he must have lifted his body."

"He did."

"Probably at that moment he made up his mind to go on. That is hard luck. If we had been a moment sooner——"

"Never mind," cried Jack. "We know that he exists. We will find him again."

This was certainly a reassuring reflection. With it for comfort the trailers of the sea serpent went on.

Into the fog the Ferret raced.

The searchlight was used, but even its power was not sufficient to penetrate the solid wall of mist.

On for miles into the fog the Ferret proceeded.

Following the course which he believed the sea serpent would take, Frank followed it.

Whether they would have succeeded or not, had it not been for a sudden incident, could not be told.

Of a sudden, Barney, who was at the searchlight, gave a warning cry. A great white object had loomed up directly in front of them.

Frank realized in that moment what it was.

He reversed the electric current.

But it was too late.

An awful cry went up:

"An iceberg. We are lost."

Then there was a crash, a rending and gliding, and the submarine boat was stationary.

The situation was plainly seen.

They had run bow on upon the iceberg. The ram had acted as the bow part of a sleigh runner, and carried the vessel high upon a shelf of ice.

And there, secure upon the iceberg, the Ferret was wedged.

It could not be seen that special harm had been done otherwise. All had experienced a shaking up.

Frank rushed out on deck at once.

It required but an instant for him to see the true state of affairs. It was useless to reverse the engines, for propellers even were out of water.

What was to be done?

This question confronted the voyagers with appalling force.

"Upon my word!" cried Howard Mayne; "we are stuck now."

"It looks like it," agreed Jack Clyde; "how will we get off, Frank?"

"I can't say, just now," replied the young inventor. "We'll try and find a remedy, however."

The iceberg rocked and swayed tremendously with weight upon it.

There seemed for a time danger that it would turn side down, a trick which bergs have of doing.

Frank went forward, as far as he could, upon the rear of the vessel.

He saw that little damage had been done the submarine boat, other than a bad shaking up.

He also saw that it would require no ordinary force to dislodge the craft from its hold.

But Frank's ingenuity was not to be so easily baffled. He quickly outlined his plans.

He returned to the cabin.

"Well?" asked Howard Mayne. "What do you think of it, Frank?"

"I think we can get off all right," replied the young inventor.

"Then the boat is not badly smashed?"

"By no means."

"That is good."

Frank went to a locker in the gun-room, and took from it several dynamite cartridges.

"Now!" he said, impressively, to his companions; "the operation of mine involves no little risk, and it may cost me a long dive to the bottom of the sea. You must do just as I tell you."

"Begorra, Misther Frank, if it's dangerous, can't I do fer yez?" asked Barney.

"No," replied Frank. "I prefer to do it myself."

"All roight, sor."

"Now, remember, you are to follow directions. Bring me my diving-suit."

Barney quickly obeyed.

Frank put this on, first explaining his purpose.

His commands were that the others should remain in the cabin with the doors securely closed.

He reckoned that the explosion would cause the berg to separate, and there was danger that the Ferret would be dashed by the falling ice.

CHAPTER VII.

FRANK'S RESCUE.

"You are to at once press the sinking valve," directed Frank; "let the Ferret go to the bottom. If I am unable to remain on the berg after the explosion I shall jump to the water and go down, also. You can there pick me at the bottom of the sea."

Frank was equipped with hammer and drills, and thus left the cabin.

Climbing out over the ram he made his way onto the berg.

Here, at a safe distance from the boat, he began to drill holes in the solid ice.

In these, at a depth of four or five feet, he placed the dynamite cartridges.

Then he connected them with a wire in a small electric battery carried in his pocket. Climbing to a safe distance he pressed the key.

At once the current shot along the wire, and there was tremendous explosion.

It was as if a thunderbolt had struck the berg.

It reeled, and split in twain.

The submarine boat shot into the water like a bolt from a catapult.

Upon that part of the berg, which turned bottom side up, was Frank Reade, Jr.

The young inventor was fathoms deep under the water. But, of course, he could not drown, having his diving-belt on.

But he could not get to the bottom where the Ferret now was, as he had hoped to do.

As fortune had it, he became wedged in between two pieces of the ice, and was unable to extricate himself.

And there he hung in a most precarious and risky position.

Down to the bottom went the Ferret.

Barney had pressed the reservoir lever just in time to allow the boat to escape the tons of ice which might have dashed it.

The Ferret went down and rested on the bottom.

Then every one was on the lookout for Frank Reade, Jr. The electric light was turned in every direction.

But not a sign of him could be seen. If he had fallen as intended, he should certainly be very near.

Objects about were very distinct; the bed of the ocean was smooth, and Frank should be easily seen.

But he was not in sight. The searchlight's rays were sent everywhere.

"Begorra, that's queer!" cried Barney. "Shure, an' phwhereiver has he gone!"

Then all exchanged startled glances.

Frank's position on the berg had been a thrilling one. There was every possibility that he had been crushed by the falling ice.

"My soul!" cried Howard Mayne; "it can't be that Frank has been killed!"

"Begorra, don't say that."

"I done fink we oughtn't to hab let Marse Frank do dat fink," cried Pomp.

"On my word," said Howard; "I fear that harm has come to him."

"Yet he may be safe on the berg yet," put in Jack.

"You are right; let us try it."

Accordingly the Ferret was sent to the surface. It lay alongside the berg, and Frank was looked for. But no sign of him was to be seen anywhere.

He was certainly not on the berg. A horrible thought occurred to all.

It seemed a certainty that he must be buried in the crushing tons of ice which had collapsed with the explosion.

But Pomp would not listen to this. The darky had an idea.

"Dat ar berg jes' tip upside down," he declared. "I done fink Marse Frank mebbe carried under by dat."

The idea was instantly embraced by the others.

"Upon my word, Pomp may be right!" cried Howard.

"That is so," agreed Jack.

"Let us investigate."

The Ferret was allowed to once more go under the surface. And this was what saved Frank's life.

The electric searchlight could not help but reveal him in his precarious position.

The Ferret ran close up under the berg. Then Barney put on a diving suit and went out on deck.

It was the work of but a few moments to rescue Frank from his position of peril. He sank down upon the deck of the boat somewhat exhausted.

Barney picked him up and carried him into the cabin. In a few moments Frank was himself again.

There was indeed good cause for rejoicing that the mishap had not been worse. It was certainly a narrow escape for Frank.

"But we got off the berg," cried Howard Mayne. "That is one good thing."

"We will try, in future, to steer clear of icebergs," said Frank.

"But we have lost the sea serpent," cried Jack.

"That is so," agreed Frank; "but we will find him again if we have to go to the North Pole."

"Which would not be a bad idea, anyway," cried Jack, excitedly. "To the North Pole under the ice."

"What an idea," put in Howard Mayne. "Would that be possible, Frank?"

"Oh, certainly," replied the young inventor; "it is quite possible."

"What a great achievement it would be."

"It may be that the sea serpent will lead us there yet."

"Is there any likelihood of that?"

"Why, yes, if he does not turn about and come toward us, or if we do not overtake him," declared Frank.

It was evident that Howard and Jack were much enthused with the idea of traveling to the North Pole under the fields of ice.

Indeed, it did look a tempting project, and plausible as well. But Frank would not think of deviating from his original intention of first capturing the sea serpent.

The fog still hung thick and heavy over the sea.

To avoid the possibility of meeting with a berg, the boat was allowed to travel under water.

To the northward the Ferret kept all the while.

The searchlight was constantly employed to catch a glimpse, if possible, of the sea serpent.

But the monster seemed to have given them the slip in some manner.

Still the Ferret kept on.

They were now sailing through a very deep part of the ocean.

Frank estimated that they were off the north coast of Newfoundland.

"If we keep on at this rate," he declared, "it will not be long before we shall enter the Arctic ocean. I would not be surprised if the serpent had gone straight for northern waters."

"All right," cried Howard, joyfully. "We do not object to going even to the Pole itself."

"It is possible that we may get there yet," said Frank. "I shall follow the serpent until I find him again."

"But how do you know that he is still on his way to the Pole?" asked Jack. "He may have turned off in another direction."

"That is true," agreed Frank; "but his course from the

first has been due north. I have only theory to depend upon. It is all a matter of chance."

"Which I hope may be lucky."

"So do I."

But the Ferret was now in seas where icebergs were abundant. As their lower part was much larger than above the surface, very often they nearly touched the bottom.

It was necessary to keep a sharp lookout in order to avoid running into one of these obstructions, which would have been indeed fatal to the Ferret.

Still to the north the submarine boat kept until well east of Davis Straits.

Here Frank came to a stop, undecided what to do. It was a random quest, certainly.

He had no idea, whatever, as to what direction to turn now.

The sea serpent might have gone on beneath the frozen waters of the Arctic, even to the North Pole.

On the other hand, it could easily have changed its course, and have gone back into warmer waters.

It was certainly not an easy matter to decide. An accident, occurred, however, which settled the question.

Barney, who was in the pilot-house, had been flashing the electric light through the black depths.

Suddenly, to the left he caught sight of what seemed to be a shadowy form outlined against the inky blackness.

It was moving slowly and sinuously, and at first the boat was unable to make out its character.

Then a mighty cry escaped him.

"Misther Frank! Och, Misther Frank!"

"What's the matter?" cried Frank, rushing from the cabin.

"Shure, sor, it's the say sarpint."

"The sea serpent!"

The cry went up from the lips of all. Then they rushed into the pilot-house.

Barney flashed the searchlight in the direction in which he had previously, and all caught a glimpse of that monstrous, sinous form.

It was the sea serpent beyond all manner of doubt.

The excitement was intense.

Frank Reade, Jr., sprang to the keyboard, and sent the submarine boat in pursuit.

Through the water flashed the boat. Now it was quite near the sea serpent.

The monster appeared to be gently swimming in a current, and was making very slow progress.

Frank headed the Ferret directly for that huge body

His hand was upon the lever which was intended to electrify the ram.

The boat shot forward, rapidly. Should it strike the sea serpent the electric chock would probably kill it.

Straight for the monster went the boat.

Everybody on board caught his breath, and hung on.

"Look out!" shouted Frank, warningly. "Now it comes!"

The prow of the ram was razor-like in its keenness. The next moment there was a grinding, powerful shock.

What followed seemed afterward to all like a vague unreality.

It seemed as if the Ferret was picked up by giant hands and hurled a fearful distance through the water.

Everything on board was turned topsy-turvy, and no person was able to keep his feet. When the commotion subsided daylight was all about, and they saw that the Ferret rested upon the surface of an angry, tossing sea.

Frank Reade, Jr., was the first to recover himself.

He was simply astounded at the turn affairs had taken. It required some time for him to collect his scattered senses, and get anything like a comprehension of the situation.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OPEN POLAR SEA.

"What's the matter, Frank?" asked Howard Mayne, rushing into the pilot-house. "What has happened?"

"That's what I can't understand," replied Frank.

"Did we strike the sea serpent?"

"Yes."

"Then he is dead?"

"That remains to be seen."

"But how came we on the surface?"

Frank examined the keyboard, and then made answer:

"Probably the shock threw open the switch," he said. "Yes—you can see how it was done."

"Then all the tumbling about came from rising to the surface?"

"Very likely."

"Well, I wonder if we really did kill the sea serpent?"

"We will soon find out."

Frank was about to send the boat to the bottom again, when a loud cry came from Barney.

"Shure, Misther Frank!" he cried.

"Well?" shouted Frank.

"It's the say sarpint, sor. Jist luk off to the west, sor." Instantly all eyes were turned in that direction. There,

far out upon the surface of the sea, was seen a long, undulating black body.

It was the sea serpent.

Frank was dumbfounded.

What did it mean? He was sure that the ram had struck the body of the monster. Indeed, the water was suffused with blood, and there were red marks upon the forward deck.

Doubtless the keen edge of the ram had cut a terrible gash in the monster's body; but it had not proved fatal.

Why had not the electric shock killed the leviathan of the deep? This was what puzzled Frank.

"It's mighty queer," he muttered. "What can it mean?"

This caused him to pause for a moment to examine the electric connections.

The idea occurred to him that they might not have been perfect.

This resulted in a discovery which explained all. It was true that the electric connection had not been complete.

A fallen wire from another part of the boat had crossed and changed the circuit, so that the current had been perverted from the ram.

The sea serpent had received no shock whatever from the ram. The attempt to kill him had proved abortive.

Frank was deeply chagrined.

He knew that it was of no use to attack the serpent again until this break had been repaired.

So he commissioned Barney to watch the sea serpent, and keep within a reasonable distance. Then he set about repairing the broken wires.

In a short while Frank had everything again in working order.

But by this time the serpent was moving northward with incredible rapidity.

Of course the submarine boat was sent rapidly in pursuit.

But now an astonishing spectacle burst upon the view of all. This was in the shape of a long white line, extending from east to west.

"A frozen sea!" cried Frank.

It was evident that they were in frigid latitudes, though the air in the Ferret was quite warm.

The plate-glass windows were, however, frosted heavily, and a powerful head wind stayed the course of the Ferret very materially.

All were extremely curious to note what action the sea serpent would make upon reaching the line of ice.

"Begorra, he may take it into his head to go right on over it," cried Barney.

"Humph! I done fink he go under," said Pomp; "or mebbe he turn aroun' an' come back."

"If he does that we will have him," said Frank. "And the ram should not fail to work this time, either."

The wound inflicted upon the serpent by the steel ram did not seem to hinder his movements in the least.

He kept on steadily until the edge of the ice pack was reached.

Then suddenly he disappeared beneath the water. One moment his monster tail was seen in the air.

"He has gone under!" cried Frank. "We must go after him!"

At the same moment he pressed the reservoir lever.

Down sank the Ferret.

When beneath the surface a safe distance, Frank sent the boat ahead at full speed.

Soon the electric light reflected upon the ice above, and they knew that they were under the pack ice.

But the sea serpent was not in sight.

For hours the chase was kept up, but yet no trace of him was seen.

Once more it was a futile quest.

Twice they had attacked his snakeship, and twice he had escaped. It might be twenty years before they would get another such an opportunity.

But Frank clung to hope.

He knew that he was upon the saurian's track. He believed that the beast was bound direct for the North Pole.

He decided to go as far in that direction as possible. It was quite a novelty to travel under the ice this way.

Howard Mayne and Jack Clyde were perfectly carried away with the idea. To them it was a treat.

"We shall make all our club friends in New York envious," said Jack. "There's Major Poke, who has traveled over India; Sam Welles, the Amazon-explorer, and Prof. Muchly, the Australian savant. They will be literally green with envy."

"Well, I've no doubt there is much gratification in that," laughed Frank; "but as for me, I wish only to capture the sea serpent."

"And I feel sure we shall do it."

"I hope so."

"By the way——?"

"Well?"

"Is there such a thing as an open Polar Sea?" asked Jack, eagerly.

"Of course," replied Frank. "All that part of the ocean contiguous to the Pole is an open sea."

"Free of ice and bergs?"

"Certainly."

"But is this known for a fact?" persisted the incredulous young man.

"It is quite well established," replied Frank; "indeed there are explorers who claim that there is a nation of people there, a famous continent where birds and beasts and reptiles, not peculiar to our land, are found."

"Wonderful! Perhaps we can establish it for a fact."

"We will try to."

"Good for you, Frank. Do you know I have quite an idea."

"What is it?"

"You know that the sea serpent may be even now on its way to its natural haunts. Perhaps its real home is in those Arctic seas, and there may be more of its kind there."

"Quite an idea," laughed Frank. "It may be true."

So it was with much interest and no little excitement that Howard and Jack looked forward to their coming into the open Polar Sea.

Thus far they had traveled almost wholly under frozen seas. The water was chilly indeed, and it was necessary to keep the electric heater in full blast.

But every day lessened the distance to the Pole.

Up Davis Straits, and finally, into the Arctic, the submarine boat traveled. Thus far nothing more had been seen of the sea serpent.

But Frank felt very sure that the destination of the monster was the open Polar Sea.

He felt confident of finding him there.

There were times when it was difficult for the boat to proceed, so little water was there between the ice and the bed of the sea.

The Arctic Ocean is a very shallow body of water, and in many places it is frozen solid, the ice being many fathoms thick. But a passage was generally found, and the Ferret kept feeling its way along.

It gave one a curious thrill to reflect that they were below the frozen wilds, where so many heroic Arctic explorers and so many gallant ships had met their fate.

It was like going into a tomb and closing the door after one, to find that it had locked itself, and there was little chance to get out.

But, still, all were in fairly good spirits. Barney and Pomp's wit did much to enliven the situation.

All depended upon the subtle machinery of the Ferret. If it should fail, they would be helpless, indeed, buried beneath frozen seas.

Frank had only one peculiar dread. As they neared

magnetic pole, he was rather in fear that the disturbing influences might affect the batteries and dynamos.

Deprived of a propelling force the Ferret could never hope to make its way out of the terrible depths.

So the young inventor proceeded with all due caution.

But the magnetic pole is not the North Pole, and soon it was passed, and they began to recede from it.

One day Frank Reade, Jr., made the startling announcement:

"We are in the open Polar Sea!"

This created tremendous excitement.

"You don't mean it!" cried Howard Mayne. "Why not give us a look at the open air again, Frank?"

"Oh, do, by all means!" cried Jack.

"I mean to," replied Frank.

So he reversed the electric levers, and the boat leaped into the upper waters. Up, up, it went.

They were at a greater depth than they had been before for a good while. Suddenly the boat leaped into the air.

She shook the water from her steel dome like a duck from its back, and lay there upon the smooth water, glistening in the radiance of the six months' sun of the Arctic summer. To the surprise of all, the air was fresh and balmy, like that of June at home. It was not at all like the Arctic hill.

Howard Mayne lost no time in walking out on the deck. The others followed.

"How do you account for this, Frank?" he asked.

"This is the Arctic summer," replied the young inventor. "Again we are under the influences of the Arctic Polar continent, where it is perpetual summer."

"Perpetual summer?"

"Even so. Quite an anomaly, is it not, a region of perpetual summer surrounded by a region of perpetual winter?"

"I should say so."

"It is true."

"How do you account for it?"

Frank pointed to the horizon.

"Look there," he said.

All looked and saw a distant, shadowy line of white.

"Those are the frozen regions," he said. "Now, look here!"

He pointed to the opposite horizon. There all saw a line, black line, and at intervals columns of smoke ascending. It was the Polar continent—the region of everlasting ice.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GIANT BEAR.

"You see the volcanoes?" asked Frank. "They explain this warmth in atmosphere. We are near the influence of internal fires which gives us this wonderful region of heat among all the cold."

It was a wonderful thing to consider. Howard Mayne and Jack Clyde were deeply interested.

"And now that we are here," cried Howard, "why may we not visit the Polar continent?"

"There is no reason why we may not," replied Frank.

"Good."

"First, however, let us do a little exploring for the sea serpent."

"This is, undoubtedly, his home!" cried Jack Clyde. "This warm basin in the Arctic, never visited by man, is just the locality for him."

"That is true," agreed Frank. "Now, let us find him if we can."

All agreed to this. But before the Ferret could be sent to the bottom again, an astounding thing occurred.

Suddenly the Ferret began to rock and pitch tremendously.

There seemed to be some disturbing influence under the water.

Suddenly, some fifty yards away, an immense object rose out of the depths.

"The sea serpent!"

Up into the air, fully forty feet, rose the head of the marine monster. It was a terrible sight.

None there ever forgot it.

The eyes of the leviathan of the deep seemed fixed upon the Ferret. He seemed about to strike it.

"Into the cabin!" yelled Frank.

The order was obeyed, and not a moment too soon. The sea serpent glided forward like a lightning flash.

Frank tried to bring the Ferret about to meet it with the ram, but he was unable to do so.

The next moment an astounding incident was enacted.

Frank had feared that the serpent would strike the boat with its jaws, but it did not.

Instead, it reared itself aloft, and then actually glided over the deck of the boat. Of course the Ferret was crushed under the surface.

It was fortunate that it was a submarine boat, and also that the doors were closed.

Otherwise it would have been the end of the boat, and all on board.

But as it was, no special harm was done, save to give all a severe shaking up.

The whole length of the serpent's body passed over the vessel. The Ferret was carried a dozen feet under water.

The moment the huge body left the deck, however, the Ferret bobbed to the surface like a cork.

But the sea serpent had shot miles away with almost incredible speed. Then it disappeared beneath the surface.

There was good reason for mutual congratulations.

These came in order, and then Frank Reade, Jr., cried:

"But we are wasting time here. Let us act at once!"

"What shall we do?" asked Howard Mayne.

"Pursue the serpent, of course."

Frank sprang into the pilot-house, and set the electric engines at work.

But they might as well have tried to pursue a will-o'-the-wisp.

The sea serpent was out of sight, and all they knew of his disappearance was that he had been going to the westward.

Frank allowed the Ferret to race on at full speed.

Every moment now they were nearing the volcanic continent.

It lay to the north, and they were proceeding to the west.

But when it became apparent that they were not going to be able to overtake the sea serpent, Frank yielded to Howard and Jack's wishes to make a landing on the Arctic continent.

The Ferret was run up close to the shore of a little bay.

The country could be seen at close range, and a remarkable scene it presented.

Not one in the party had ever seen such beautiful green verdure as here existed.

"Behad, 'it's the rale Irish green!" cried Barney.

A small boat put out from the Ferret, and Frank, with Howard and Jack, went ashore.

They were all delighted with the Arctic country.

"By Jove, there's nothing equal to this in the world!" declared Jack.

"Look at that distant line of mountains. See how wonderfully beautiful they are in their outline."

"And that valley," cried Jack. "Really, I wonder if there are no human beings in this strange land?"

"There is a tradition that it is inhabited," said Frank; "and that the inhabitants are descendants of some hardy Norse warriors."

"Wouldn't it be fine if we could only find them."

"I don't know about that. They are doubtless very strange fellows."

"Ah, yes; no doubt. Well, I wonder if animals inhabit these wilds?"

But the question was answered at that very moment.

They were approaching a mountain whose slopes were covered with a thick growth of firs.

Suddenly from among these, and out upon a crag, stepped a giant animal.

"Merciful heavens! What is it; an elephant?" gasped Jack.

"A bear."

But it was not the common species of Polar bear which is always as white as the eternal snows.

Its color was jet black, and its size was nearly double that of the white bear, and even larger than "Old Ephraim" of the Rocky Mountain grizzly.

That it was a savage and terrible monster to meet there was no doubt. At sight of the men below it uttered a horrible roar.

"By gracious," exclaimed Howard Mayne. "I don't care about a near acquaintance."

"Nor I," said Frank Reade, Jr.; "let us change our location a little."

But Jack Clyde had become imbued with a sudden resolution.

"Wait," he said. "I am going to try a shot at him."

"You will only waste your powder," said Frank; "he will not be easily killed. Better leave him alone."

"Not much," cried Jack; "you shall see what a good shot I am."

With which he instantly raised his rifle and fired.

That the bullet struck the bear there was no doubt.

The beast reeled, and seemed partly to slip from its perch. Then it raised one huge paw and began to cuff its ear vigorously.

"Good shot," cried Frank. "Where did you aim, Jack?"

"For the head."

"And you evidently hit the mark, but failed to reach his brain."

"Better luck next time."

"Aye!"

Jack drew the hammer of his repeater, and took another aim. This time the bullet must have struck the bear on the shoulder, for he clapped one paw upon that member and let out a terrible roar.

Then, before Jack could fire again, the beast came down from its shelf like an avalanche.

"Now is the time to get out of the way," cried Howard Mayne.

But Frank and Jack did not move.

"Now we've started on it, we had better kill the beast," declared the young inventor. "I fear we shall have trouble."

"So do I," said Howard.

"However, aim for the shoulder," cried Frank. "You may reach the heart."

Once the animal's heart was reached the fight was over. Frank knew this.

The bear had got down from his rocky perch with almost incredible speed. He now burst forth from the brush at the foot of the slope.

As terrible looking monster he was, as the personification of brute fury, he came full speed to the fray.

"Steady," cried Frank; "take plenty of time to aim."

Each knew that their salvation depended on that shot.

Should they fail to bring the monster down, one or more of them was likely to be injured or killed.

No chances, therefore, could be taken; it was a time when nerves of steel were needed.

But not one in the party flinched. Good, careful aim was taken.

When the bear was about forty yards distant, Frank gave the word:

"Now! Fire!"

"There was one material advantage. The bear was a tremendous mark, and a novice could not have missed him. True to the mark went the bullets. All three struck the shoulder, and one went through to the heart.

The giant bear dropped, and was dead instantly. So excited were the hunters that involuntarily they flung up their hats and cheered.

"We've got him!" cried Jack Clyde, wildly. "What a prize! His skin will be worth five hundred dollars in New York!"

"Indeed, you're right!" cried Howard.

Each advanced and stood over the monster. Then Frank said:

"Before we leave, Barney and Pomp shall remove his skin."

No further exploration was intended before returning to the Ferret.

The manner of animals inhabiting this strange and unexplored continent were of vast interest to our friends.

Even Frank Reade, Jr., himself, was very deeply interested.

Leaving the headland of the coast behind them the party advanced inland.

The entrance to a deep valley was before them. Entering this they beheld a wonderful scene.

Below were extensive lowlands. Down from the mountains ran streams of water, forming wonderful cataracts.

Far below were lakes and meadows, forests and inter-valles, all making a beautiful panorama of green.

"An Eden at the North Pole," cried Jack Clyde; "perhaps we have discovered the old home of Adam and Eve."

"If so, then we had better stay here," laughed Howard Mayne. "We know a good thing when we see it."

"Alas! I fear we would find our supposed Eden fruit but apples of ashes," said Frank. "America is the modern Eden."

"Good enough," cried Howard; "that is a patriotic sentiment one might be proud of."

Further conversation was interrupted at this moment by a strange incident.

A peculiar, wild cry rang out upon the air. For a moment all half fancied that it was human.

Then Howard Mayne cried:

"My soul! Look there."

All gazed in the indicated direction, and were rendered spellbound by the strange spectacle they beheld.

CHAPTER X.

THE SEA SERPENT AND THE WHALE.

The explorers, in entering the valley, had noticed a peculiar species of tree much resembling a palm.

A clump of these were not two hundred yards distant.

It was from them that the cry came. From the depths of the forest a strange-looking creature stepped out and performed a most wonderful feat.

For a moment the explorers could well have believed themselves transported back to early prehistoric ages.

The animal, or creature, or whatever it was, was a cross between a salamander and a kangaroo.

But its size was elephantine. Indeed, so great was its height, that it seemed occupied in eating the tops of the peculiar-looking trees.

Frank Reade, Jr., passed a hand across his eyes.

"I hope I'm not dreaming," he muttered; "but I could almost take my oath that I am living in another age."

"That creature belongs to a prehistoric race," cried Howard. "I say, Jack, what is its scientific name?"

"Do you want me to have paralysis of the jaw?" laughed Jack. "I never could pronounce it nor remember it."

"That is a creature long since believed extinct," said Frank. "What would not some of our famous zoologists give to be here now?"

"I'm afraid we'll never be able to tell them about it if we stay here much longer," cried Jack. "I have heard it said those chaps are fond of human meat."

"I think he has his fiendish eye on me now," cried Howard. "Let's go at once."

There was evidently no better course to adopt. So the three explorers got out of the valley quickly.

But at the end of the pass Jack Clyde halted.

"By Jupiter, I'm going to see if that fellow can eat bullets," he cried. "He looks as if he could eat locomotives for desert."

"No; don't fire at him," cried Howard, in dismay.

But before either he or Frank could interfere, Jack fired. The result was at least a comical one.

The bullet struck the mailed coat of the monster and glanced off as from a steel target.

The creature ceased eating, and looked about in a puzzled manner. That was all.

Then it resumed its feeding quite unconcerned. The explorers looked at each other, and then burst out laughing.

"Enough," cried Frank Reade, Jr.; "let us return to the Ferret. We have had experience enough for one day."

"So say I," exclaimed Howard Mayne. "Jack, I don't think much of your marksmanship."

A short while later they were on board the Ferret.

Barney and Pomp went ashore to remove the skin of the giant bear. When they returned Frank hoisted the anchor of the submarine boat.

"Now for new scenes," he cried. "We will visit this continent again at some future time."

Howard nor Jack did not demur. They were perfectly willing to resume the quest for the sea serpent.

Straight to the westward the submarine boat went. Frank believed that the sea serpent had, as heretofore, kept a straight course.

"Perhaps the monster will keep straight on through the Behring Straits," he declared. "If so, we may yet get into the Pacific."

"And go half round the world," cried Howard. "That would be grand!"

Part of the time the Ferret traveled under the water, and part of the while on the surface.

In this manner the open sea was crossed in about three days and nights.

Then once more the white line of the frozen region showed on the horizon. Frank was in a quandary what to do.

If he went straight on through Behring Straits he had no way of knowing but that the sea serpent had lingered in the Arctic basin.

What should he do? Should he stop and continue the quest further in the open sea?

On the other hand, if the serpent had gone on and the Behring Sea, then he would be wasting time by remaining in the open Polar Sea.

It was some time before Frank could quite make up his mind.

And again, as before, he was led to do so by a singular incident. Jack Clyde was the first witness of it.

The submarine boat was forging along at full speed, every moment approaching nearer the ice barrier.

Suddenly there was a tremendous commotion in the water not a mile distant from the Ferret.

Great columns of white spray went flying into the air. A couple of huge bodies were seen thrashing about together, apparently engaged in a deadly combat.

"Two whales!" cried Jack. "They are having a fight." His cry brought all out on deck. Instantly the course of the Ferret was changed to approach the scene.

It was apparently a battle of giants.

Words can hardly describe the scene. The water was lashed in hillocks of foam for a hundred yards about the contestants.

But as they drew nearer to the scene Frank Reade made a startling discovery.

"Hurrah!" he shouted. "We're on the right track!"

"Right track!" exclaimed Howard Mayne. "What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. Those are not two whales fighting, but one whale and the sea serpent."

"The sea serpent?"

There was no disputing the fact; this was certainly the monster and a large sperm whale were engaged in a deadly combat.

The coils of the serpent could be seen to be wound completely about the whale, and its huge head was working in the water like a battering ram.

The whale was making a valiant fight, and for a time it was doubtful which would win.

It was not safe for the Ferret to approach very near the combatants.

The sea was churned into waves of great height; the battle was a fast and furious one.

But it was too terrific to last long. Suddenly the contestants disappeared beneath the waves.

The sea boiled and tossed over the spot where they had
 le down.
 All on board the Ferret looked to see them come up again;
 t after a time Frank said:
 "Lower the boat, Barney, and we'll see what is going on
 wn there."
 But Howard Mayne said:
 "No; see!
 Up to the surface there came suddenly a huge, black
 ly. It lay dormant upon the water.
 It was the whale, dead. The sea serpent had been vic-
 tious.
 All on board the Ferret were deeply impressed with the
 ult. But even while they were reflecting upon it, a cry
 nt up:
 "There is the serpent!"
 All gazed in the direction indicated.
 There, dead to the westward and making a rapid course
 the ice fields, was the sea serpent.
 The monster's head was high out of the water, and it was
 veling with great speed.
 "Quick!" shouted Frank; "let us pursue it. If we could
 y overtake it, I think this time we could end the fellow's
 eer."
 Barney sprang into the pilot-house and sent the boat
 ad at full speed. Across the waters it raced.
 And, indeed, it seemed to gain rapidly on the serpent.
 Every moment it drew nearer. The monster was swim-
 ing leisurely, and did not seem to heed its pursuer.
 But when within one hundred yards of the serpent the
 marine boat could not seem to get nearer.
 Although put to its full speed, the Ferret yet maintained
 the same distance. This gave those on board an excellent
 ace to study the sea serpent.
 His leviathan folds, wriggling through the water, were
 y tly gigantic in circumference. Yet they were as light
 ge lissome in action as though not so ponderously heavy.
 The risk which Frank took in approaching the serpent
 d closely was no slight one.
 It would seem as if the monster could easily, at any mo-
 t, turn, and, with a single blow, demolish the submar-
 tine boat.
 But Frank kept the ram constantly charged with elec-
 tricity, and depended wholly upon its effectiveness.
 Again the engines of the Ferret were taxed to their ut-
 most capacity.
 The distance between it and the serpent could not be ap-
 pably overcome. Indeed, before long it became appar-
 ent that the monster was gaining.

They were now nearing the ice field rapidly. The cold
 was increasing bitterly.
 "Mercy on us," cried Howard Mayne. "We shall never
 be able to catch that chap."
 "It looks like it," agreed Frank.
 "Bejabbers, mebbe I kin faix the beast," cried Barney,
 picking up his rifle. He drew aim and fired.
 But to the surprise of all the bullet was seen to lift the
 scales slightly on the monsters back. It had glanced off.
 Its hide was bullet-proof at that range.
 "Beggorra, wud yez luk at ther lojkes av that?" cried
 Barney. "Shure, it's a hard ould skin he has, to be sure."
 It was evident that the career of the sea serpent could
 not be brought to an end in that manner.
 Indeed, before any further move could be made, the mon-
 ster disappeared beneath the waves.
 Frank at once shouted:
 "All inside! Close down the doors!"
 This order was quickly obeyed. Then down sank the
 submarine boat to the bottom of the ocean.
 But the sea serpent had disappeared. Nothing whatever
 could be seen of it.
 Frank, however, kept a straight course under the water.
 The depth was greater here than at any part of the north-
 ern seas which they struck yet.
 Still the submarine boat kept on its course. Frank felt
 certain that the sea serpent's course would be directly under
 the frozen seas to Behring Straits.
 In this event no doubt the chase would be carried into
 the Pacific.
 He was not sorry for this, for the thought of traveling
 under the hundreds of miles of ice was indeed an unpleas-
 ant one.
 How long it would take to reach the open seas of Beh-
 ring Straits could not very well be estimated.
 Frank, however, hoped that two weeks would do it. The
 Ferret was capable of quite good speed under the surface.
 But thrilling episodes were near at hand, and their trip
 under the frozen Arctic was destined to be one long re-
 membered.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BERG CAVERN.

This distance should certainly be covered easily in four
 days. In that event a week should see them in Behring
 Straits.
 They were now near the end of the ice floes, and Frank
 hoped to very quickly reach daylight.

All had grown extremely weary of traveling through the darkened waters and gloomy depths.

Fish of all kinds were in some places quite abundant.

In shallow waters seals and walruses were often seen beneath the surface. But as yet, no trace of the sea serpent.

On the third day a thrilling incident came near terminating the career of the submarine boat, and the voyagers as well.

Frank was forward in the pilot-house when he saw an immense narwhal steering straight for the boat.

The fish was a monster of its species. What was more, it was not alone.

Back of it were others; in fact, a perfect school. They were all bearing toward the submarine boat, with the apparent intention of striking it.

Frank knew well what such a contingency as this would mean.

The narwhal of the Arctic is a heavy fish, second to the whale, and is provided with a powerful lance, or so-called sword, upon the extremity of his head.

A blow from this had been known to pierce the timbers of a ship.

Frank knew the danger of an encounter with so many of these powerful fish. It meant probable annihilation of the boat.

With an exclamation of horror he sprang to the switch-board. Quick as a flash he pressed the elevating key.

The pneumatic valves quickly forced the water out of the reservoirs and the boat sprang upward.

The move was executed not a moment too soon. The fish passed directly under the Ferret.

Indeed the commotion rocked the boat violently. But this was not the end of it all.

In its upward career the Ferret struck the ice above. The water was more shallow than Frank had reckoned on.

But fortunately it was a thin coating, and really covered a basin in the interior of a mighty mountain or berg of pack ice.

The Ferret shot up into this basin like a cork, breaking the thin ice. At the same moment its engines forced the boat forward and it shot with full force between opposing cakes of ice, and wedged there.

It was driven clean out of the water upon a shelf of the berg, and to add to the catastrophe, an immense cake fell down from above and lodged across the bows.

Thus the Ferret was pinioned in the heart of the hollow berg. All had been done in the twinkling of an eye.

Perhaps the most astonished person in the crowd was

Barney, who had been in the dome, regulating the sea light.

For a moment he fancied that he had been the cause of the sudden rise of the boat by changing the circuit or throwing open a switch.

"Begorra, phwat the divil is wrong?" he yelled, excitedly tumbling down from his perch. "Och, Misther Frank!"

But at that moment he saw Frank in the engine-room and understood all, and that the young inventor was alone responsible for the change of base.

"Shure, Misther Frank, and phwat's the matter?" cried.

"Don't ask me yet, Barney," replied Frank. "I tried to get out of the way of a school of narwhal, and had no time to think. We were so near the surface."

Everybody now was on hand.

It required but a glance to take in the true situation. It certainly was a most startling one.

"Golly! I done fink we am anchored now, Misther Frank," cried Pomp.

"Where on earth are we?" cried Howard Mayne. "Are we yet under the sea?"

Indeed, it required a second glance to determine, through the misty glass, whether they were yet in water or in air.

But a few moments served to settle this fact beyond dispute. Then the question arose as to what ought to be done.

Frank opened the door and stepped out upon the deck.

He examined the position of the boat, and made a startling declaration:

"We are under a moving berg," he declared. "Look at the current in the basin which will tell you."

All looked at the black water in the basin, and saw that the berg was moving.

"You are right, Frank," cried Howard Mayne. "The berg is moving."

"What is more, we are in a fearfully dangerous position."

"Dangerous?"

"Yes; we are in imminent danger of being crushed to atoms at any moment."

"How is that?" asked Howard Mayne.

"Look up and you will see."

Far above, in the arches of the berg cavern, huge masses of ice, tons upon tons, were seen hanging in a most precarious position, seemingly waiting but a slight encouragement to fall.

If they should fall in it would mean a collapse of the berg, and the cavern would tumble in.

The result of such a contingency, so far as the submarine it was concerned, can be imagined.

It would be crushed like an eggshell.

Every moment the berg was drifting into warmer waters, which simply meant that it was approaching nearer to destruction.

The position of the *Ferret*, therefore, was an awful one.

The voyagers were aghast.

What was to be done? This question was stamped upon every face. Instinctively all looked toward Frank Reade,

He was the genius of the crowd, and to him they looked for a method of deliverance.

And Frank's mind was not idle. He had been very busy endeavoring to formulate a plan for deliverance.

He saw that it was not going to be easy to do this. But the danger of the falling ice, it would be easy enough to dislodge the *Ferret* from its position with dynamite.

But the shock of the explosion would be fatal. There was no doubt of this.

The cold on the deck was intense. All repaired to the cabin, and a conference was held.

After some discussion, Frank said:

"I believe there is but one thing for us to do. We must make picks and axes and dig the *Ferret* out of the trap."

"Correct," cried Howard Mayne. "But how long will it take to do that?"

"I cannot say. It will depend upon our capabilities for digging ice."

"That settles it," cried Jack Clyde. "Let us not waste time, but at once go to work."

This sentiment was echoed by the others. Picks and axes were furnished, and everyone went out on deck.

Each knew that while working there he was under the shadow of death. The ice above might fall at any moment and crush him to death.

But all worked resolutely and bravely.

At times small fragments falling from above would fill the air with consternation.

One day a falling block, weighing tons, struck in the waters of the basin.

The reverberation was fearful, and it seemed as if the *Ferret* was about to tumble. But it did not.

Gradually the ice was cleared from the bow of the *Ferret*.

After a course of time, and with much effort, this was accomplished. Then the question of getting the boat back into the water arose.

This was no light undertaking. But, nevertheless, a channel was dug down to the water's edge.

Then a cable was drawn about a spur of ice upon the opposite side of the basin. Frank set the electric engines at work.

Slowly and surely the boat slid down the improvised icy ways. It neared the water rapidly.

Suddenly it slid into the basin. Then cheers went up.

The voyagers quickly scrambled aboard. There was really no time to lose. A creaking and straining of the ice roof was ominous.

Frank threw back the key on the switchboard, and the *Ferret* sank.

It was not a moment too soon. There was a terrible commotion above, an earthquake-like shock.

The berg had tumbled in. Had the boat been in the cavern at that moment it would have been crushed to atoms.

It was the narrowest kind of an escape. Five minutes more and the fate of the *Ferret* and its crew would have been sealed forever.

Down to the bottom Frank went. Matters were quickly put to rights, and the *Ferret* went on its way.

A day later and they were well out from under the ice.

Straight down toward Point Barrow, the northernmost part of Alaska, the submarine boat held its course.

As yet, since leaving the open Polar sea, no sign of the sea serpent had been seen.

Frank, however, was yet sanguine of coming up with his snakeship. He was very resolute in his purpose to bag the big game.

"We shall find him in the Straits," he declared; "or at the farthest, in the basin of Behring's Sea."

Succeeding events proved that his conviction was based correctly.

The *Ferret* had passed into the Straits, and was making slow work against a head wind, when Pomp, who was on lookout, sighted a vessel far to the eastward.

"Marse Frank, it jes' look like to me as if dey was in trouble," cried the darky. "Wha' yo' fink?"

Frank procured his glass, and studied the distant vessel.

"You are right, Pomp," he cried, finally; "they are in trouble."

"What sort of craft is it, Frank?" asked Howard Mayne.

"I would not be surprised if it was a sealer," replied Frank; "but she is in trouble, and we must go to her."

At once the course of the submarine boat was changed and held down for the distant ship.

It required some time to cross the intervening miles.

But Frank signaled the distant vessel, and received an answer.

There was no doubt but that she was in distress. Frank answered that he would assist her.

Finally, the submarine boat came within hailing distance of the ship, which it was now seen was aground.

The sea was smooth, and she had not as yet received any damage.

But, of course, it was impossible to tell when this might happen. A high sea would sweep over her decks and break her up.

Frank went out on deck and hailed the ship:

"Ahoy!" he shouted.

"Ahoy!" came back.

"What vessel is that?"

"The Utopia, from Seattle, engaged in catching seals," was the reply.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SAND BAR—END OF THE SEA SERPENT.

"Just as I thought," said Frank, turning to his companions. "She is a sealer."

Then he shouted:

"What is your distress?"

"We're aground on a bar," replied the captain of the Utopia. "We ran into shallow water without knowing it. I say!" he queried, "what sort of a craft is that?"

"It is a submarine boat," replied Frank.

"Who are you?"

"I am Frank Reade, Jr."

"Never heard tell on ye. I am Mose Gilson, of Seattle, captain of this ship."

"I am glad to meet you, Mr. Gilson. I am coming over to see you."

Frank put out a boat, and Barney entered it with him. They at once rowed over to the ship.

Up onto the deck they scrambled. The captain was a burly six footer, with a long sweep of whiskers.

"Durned glad to meet ye!" he said, heartily gripping Frank's hand. "I reckon ye're a man by the looks of ye."

"Thanks," replied Frank, brusquely. "Now, Captain Gilson, what can I do to help you?"

"Nothing, unless you can get me off this bar."

"Have you much of a cargo on board?"

"Three thousand sealskins; but I say, Cap'en, how are you goin' to get us off this mud, anyway?"

"Simply blow a hole in the bar with a dynamite tridge."

"But the ship——"

"Don't you fear; it shall not be harmed, I will prove you."

"But how are ye goin' to get down under the place the cartridge?"

"You forget that my boat can go under water. But is not all; I have a diving suit!"

The captain of the Utopia slapped Frank on the heartily.

"Bravo!" he cried, "that is a good move. But I say, friend?"

"Well?"

"What are ye after in these parts?"

Frank smiled, and replied:

"You will, no doubt, be surprised, when I tell you, are after the sea serpent."

"The sea serpent?"

Captain Gilson was much excited. To Frank's surprise he did not betray incredulity, but said:

"By hookey! ye're on the right track. Hyar!"

He led Frank to the rail. Pointing to the horizon, land was visible, he said:

"Them's the Alentian Isles. Ye'll find the serpent some place near them. We saw it there this mornin'."

"You don't say!" exclaimed Frank, excitedly; "the information we want."

Then he checked himself.

"But wait," he continued; "I mean to see you sandbar."

Frank stepped into the boat, and was rowed back Ferret. As he stepped on deck, he said:

"All below. I have important work to do."

"Do you think you can help her out of her trouble?" asked Howard Mayne.

"Yes," replied Frank; "I know that I can."

"Good enough."

All at once went into the cabin. Frank quickly the doors and lowered the boat beneath the surface.

The water was very shallow, but the submarine worked its way to within a dozen yards of the stern of the Utopia.

Then Frank put on his diving-suit, and said: "Wait here until I return."

He disappeared in the sea. Proceeding directly to the Utopia he had soon reached its hull.

It was an easy matter to find his way to the bow. This was buried several feet in the deep mud.

He saw that it was only the clinging mud which held it, and that this could be quickly removed.

The bar was a long ridge not over a dozen feet across. The dynamite was placed some twenty feet along the other side of the bar, Frank believed that the bar could be cut without doing any material damage to the ship.

So he carefully dug a hole in the sand, and placed the cartridge in it. Tamping the cavity with loose shells and bricks he extended the wire along the bed of the sea.

Then back to the Ferret he laid the wire.

It was but a moment's work to clamber aboard.

Quickly he connected the wire with the dynamos. Then he allowed the Ferret to rise to the surface.

This was because it was safer to be above than below the water.

The crew of the Utopia had seen the Ferret disappear, and were eagerly waiting for her reappearance.

As she now appeared the crew gave a cheer. Frank Reade, Jr., opened the door, and stepped out on deck.

"Ahoy!" he shouted.

"Hello," replied Captain Gilson, appearing at the rail. "What can I do for ye, Cap'n?"

"We are now ready to fire the cartridge," replied Frank. "May I give your ship a little shaking up?"

"All right. We're ready!"

"Then here goes."

Frank pressed the electric key. Almost instantly there was an earthquake-like shock.

That seemed like a huge tidal wave rolled over the bar. It shook the Utopia and the Ferret up like corks, and carried them yards away.

The Utopia was completely swept off the bar. The wind tore her sails, and she began to fill away.

The tops sprang her men. Rattling cheer after cheer rang up.

"Stop at Seattle an' see us!" shouted bluff Captain Gilson. "I hope ye'll catch the sea serpent."

Frank waved his arms in reply, and then sprang to the pilot-house.

He set his course at once for the distant Aleutian Islands.

The Ferret raced across the sea like a sprite. All that day the quest was kept up.

Yet not a trace of the sea serpent could be found.

"I'm afraid we've lost trace of him," said Frank, finally. "Probably he has gone south, or perhaps out into the Pacific toward Hawaii."

"Don't abandon hope," said Howard Mayne, encourag-

ing. "I don't intend to. Yet there is little chance, I fear."

At that moment a ringing cry from Barney went from one end of the boat to the other.

"Bejabbers, an' there he is, Misther Frank!"

Frank rushed to the rail.

There was no mistaking the fact. There, just rounding the end of a small isle, was the sea serpent.

He came on proudly through the surf, like a conquering army. His head was fully twenty feet in the air.

Frank sprang to the pilot-house.

"Look out!" he shouted. "Stand by, every one."

The Ferret shot forward like an arrow.

Frank saw the course of the sea serpent plainly. It was straight for a small channel between the islands.

The young inventor's game was to cut him off at that point. He did not believe the monster would change his course.

If he could reach him at just the right moment, he would be sure to strike him broadside with the ram.

So Frank sent the vessel on like a bird. Straight for the isle she went.

And down along the shore glided the sea serpent. It could be seen that both boat and serpent must reach a given point at the same moment.

It was a critical moment.

Every man on board clung to some object, and held his breath. The next moment the impact came.

The ram of the submarine boat struck the sea serpent's body full and fair. There was a shock, a recoil, and then Frank shut off the engines.

The ram was buried two feet deep in the serpent's body. The monster had been instantly killed.

A cheer went up from all on board the Ferret.

The long, powerful body of the sea serpent floated upon the top of the water.

It was drifting in the surf toward the island. Frank wished to avoid this, so he sent the submarine boat around the serpent's body for the purpose of affixing a line to its head and towing it to sea.

This plan would have worked well had it not been for an unfortunate fact.

The shore of the island at this juncture was fringed with a series of sunken reefs. Almost before those on board the Ferret had a chance to realize it there was a terrible crash.

Then water rushed into the cabin and over the bow.

Barney ran up the stairs, shouting:

"Murder, murder, Misther Frank. It's wrecked we are, an' the boat is sinking."

"Merciful powers!" gasped Mayne; "we have struck a rock."

"We are going down!"

"Get out the boat!"

"Save yourselves!"

There was hardly time to get the Ferret's boat into the water. The next moment the end came.

The beautiful submarine boat went down beneath the waves, with a hole stove in her steel hull, which could not be repaired in that part of the world.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE END.

The Ferret's bow remained out of the water, but that was all.

In that moment Frank saw the triumph of his inventive genius forever ruined.

He knew that it would be utterly useless for him to think of raising the boat. The delicate electrical machinery would be spoiled by the water in any event.

So he said:

"Pull for the shore, boys. We have got to make the best of it."

This was done slowly and sadly.

"It is a confounded shame!" cried Howard Mayne, forcibly. "Why could we not have seen that rock!"

"Never mind," said Frank; "we captured the sea serpent."

"But what good will that do us? We can never get it home!"

"Oh, I think we can!"

"How?"

"It will drift ashore. We can then remove its skin and preserve its bones."

"Correct!" cried Jack Clyde; "but is there any chance of getting home?"

"Oh, yes," replied Frank. "Some Olent Indian will take us to the mainland, or a sealing vessel will pass this way."

"I hope so."

"I know it!"

This reassured all. When the boat reached the shore all sprang out.

The first move was to make a fire and dry their clothes. Then darkness came.

The isle was rather a barren spot, but the castaways made themselves at home, and were quite comfortable for the night.

The next morning the mighty sea serpent lay high on the beach, where the waves had carried it.

At once all set about removing the monster skin. In a

very short time the leviathan was divested of the covering nature had given him.

Fires were built, and the work of recovering the skin was begun. Several days were thus consumed.

The skin and skeleton of the serpent were very well preserved.

Then one morning the castaways awoke to hear a cannon shot.

A vessel off shore had seen their signal.

A boat put off, and the first person to step out of it was Captain Gilson, of the Utopia.

"Well, I vow," he cried, in surprise; "what does all this mean? Shipwrecked?"

"That is the size of it," replied Frank. "Can you get us aboard your ship?"

"Can I?" blurted the big captain. "Waal, I know I can get a chance to pay ye back!"

All were taken on board the Utopia. Some weeks later they were in Seattle.

From thence they went to San Francisco. The news of their return spread through the country.

It created great excitement and interest. Crowds gathered at the wharf to see them land.

But Frank, and Barney and Pomp went at once to Readestown.

Howard Mayne and Jack Clyde went back to New York, where they were at once installed as the lions of the Utopian Club.

The skin and skeleton of the sea serpent is to be presented to the Smithsonian Institute, as a memento of the most wonderful enterprises of modern times.

And thus having brought our characters to a proper point in this narrative, let us write

THE END.

Read "FRANK READE, JR.'S PRAIRIE WIND; OR, THE MYSTERY OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE," which will be the next number (33) of the Reade Weekly Magazine."

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